(b) the present status of those projects;

(c) the detials of fund allocation made for these projects in 2000-2001; and

(d) the target date fixed for completion of those projects?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) and (b) No proposal for gauge conversion in Orissa is pending with the Government. Conversion of both the NG lines viz. Rupsa-Bangriposi and Naupada-Gunupur is sanctioned. On Rupsa-Bangriposi, work is in progress and on Naupada-Gunupur, the work will be taken up after obtaining necessary clearances action for which has already been initiated.

(c) and (d) Rs. 1 cr. has been provided for gauge conversion of Rupsa-Bangriposi and Rs. 5.10 cr. for Naupada-Gunupur. The target dates for completion of various projects are fixed on year to year basis subject to availability of resources.

Higher Drop out Rate in North Indian States

*489. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that out of 110 million children in the school-going age, as many as 32 million do not go to schools, as per the report of Centre of Concern for Child Labour (CCCL) published in the Hidustan Times dated the 4th April, 2000;

(b) whether it is also a fact that North Indian States suffer from a higher school drop-out rate than Southern states; and

(c) if so, by when the proposed 83rd amendment to the Constitution is likely to be brought before Parliament, so as to provide for compulsory primary education to children in India?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) Yes Sir, Most recent surveys indicate that 70% of the children in the 6 to 14 age group are attending schools.

(b) Age specific attendance ratio by broad age group brought out by the National Sample Survey Organisation 52nd Round, 1995-96 indicates that a lower percentage of children are attending schools in a number of North Indian States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. However, the performance of States like Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Union Territories of Chandigarh and Delhi are as good as most Southern States.

(c) The proposed Eighty Third Constitutional Amendment Bill was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee that submitted its Report in November, 1997. La Commission of India also made suggestions in this regard in its 165th Report. Taking into account these suggestions, a revised draft amendment is currently under consideration of a Group of Ministers set up by the Cabinet.

Transfer Policy in CSIR

*490. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY:
SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that CSIR has formulated a policy for its common cadre officers in respect of postings and transfers, particularly, for officers who have less than three years to retire from service;

(b) if so, the detials thereof;

(c) the number of officers due to retire in next three years, the names of officers working away from their home towns; and

(d) if the answer to part (a) above be in the affirmative, the steps taken by Government to rectify the anomaly?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) CSIR has not formulated a policy as regards trasnfers & postings of its common cadre officers, particularly, in respect of those who have less than 3 years to superannuate from Council service. However, there are certann guidelines as regards transfers & postings which are followed in respect of all the common cadre officers including those who have less than 3 years to superannuate.

(b) As regards the officers having less than 3 years to retire on superannuation, the guidelines *inter-alia* enunciate that such officers will be retained at the same station on promotion or otherwise as far as possible barring exception and/or at the discretion of the competent authority.

(c) The postings and transfers of common cadre officers in CSIR, as per the guidelines, are made in public interest and/or as per the preference(s) indicated by the officer(s) before appearing in interview for promotion and not as per their declared hometown. As of now, 141 officers are due to retire on